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Ratner ups the ante



Bruce Ratner

Says he might add 'mini' arena for kid sports to Netsplex site

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Developer Bruce Ratner has been floating the notion that he might build a second sports facility — for amateur athletics — in addition to a professional basketball arena for the New Jersey Nets, on the site for the proposed Atlantic Yards development.

While it isn't clear whether the facility would be housed within the proposed 800,000-square-foot, 19,000-seat professional basketball arena or elsewhere, amateur athletic groups working closely with Forest City Ratner say they have been told that a 3,000-seat "gym" adjacent to the arena was being considered.

"We have been talking to local sports folks and they've indicated

EXCLUSIVE

an interest in an amateur athletic facility and that is something we would like to discuss further with them and consider," said Joe DePlasco, a spokesman for Ratner, who declined to elaborate on where it would be located or how regularly it would be available to amateur organizations.

"We do very much want to incorporate a larger amateur athletic program overall into the effort," Dellascio added. "And we are certainly open to discussing using the NBA facility for major school games, etc."

Ratner's Atlantic Yards site stretches east into Prospect Heights from the intersection of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues.

Richard Lipsky, a lobbyist for Ratner who works closely with amateur athletics groups and youth organizations, said that he's met with more than 60 groups to discuss an outreach program sponsored by Forest City Ratner. He said that besides discounted tickets to Nets games and a possibility that the

NOT JUST NETS THE NEW BROOKLYN

Nets arena would host Public School Athletic League (PSAL) championship basketball games, a flurry of other ideas have been suggested, although none are certain.

Vernon Jones, president of NYC Basketball.com, expressed doubt that the extra facility would be anything more than a practice facility for the New Jersey Nets, which Ratner agreed to purchase in January for \$300 million. If that were the case, he said, area youth groups

would likely only be allowed access on an irregular basis.

At an anti-Ratner rally on Sunday, and later in telephone conversations, Jones suggested that \$67 million earmarked four years ago for the construction of Sportsplex, an amateur athletic arena planned for Coney Island, could be usurped by Ratner and put toward the Atlantic Yards project under the guise of being used as a facility for amateur

See RATNER on page 14

Witnesses sell 360 Furman St.

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is in final negotiations with a buyer who plans to convert part of the hulking, 12-story video and book distribution plant along the Brooklyn Heights waterfront at 360 Furman St. into housing.

Robert Levine, a Manhattan-based developer with nationwide interests, told The Brooklyn Papers this week that he was working out the final details to purchase the property, located at the foot of Jerusalem Street. He said he would convert at least part of it to residential use.

"We will work with the city and state to realize the best possible project," said Levine, principal owner of RAL Companies & Associates. He declined to further comment on the deal until the contract is signed.

Levine is best known for converting the former Arthur Levitt State Office Building, at 260 Broadway at Chambers Streets in Lower Manhattan, into a combination of condominiums, rental apartments and offices. He purchased the 28-story building, which was used by the state for more than 50 years, for \$38 million in 2000.

Ever since the property on Furman Street north of Atlantic Avenue hit the market last June, speculators have wondered what connection the building might have — both physically and financially — to the planned Brooklyn Bridge Park, a 1.3-mile commercial and recreational development planned for the waterfront between the Manhattan Bridge and Atlantic Avenue.

Atlantic Avenue would serve as a gateway to the park and visitors would have to walk around the Furman Street building to get to most of the park.

See FURMAN on page 4



The future is now

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

Tonight (Saturday, April 3) at 11:30 pm, the New York cast of Neo-Futurists will perform Greg Allen's "Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind" (30 plays in 60 minutes) at the Brooklyn Lyceum in Park Slope.

Each play is written by a Neo-Futurist ensemble member with 29 other plays through high-energy audience participation. (Each week, two to 12 plays — literally, depending on rolls of the dice — are replaced as ensemble members add new plays to the existing body of work.)

"It's never the same show, even on the same weekend," explained Neo-Futurist ensemble member Michael Cyril Creighton, who made the cut with 10 other members by surviving auditions hosted by Allen.

"The shows are a mixture of everything, ranging from comedy to very current events to very abstract pieces, even some movement stuff," said Creighton. "It's a hodgepodge of all different kinds of theater."

The scripts are based on the actors' real experiences,

explained Creighton. "We are always seeking from ourselves, not trying to fool the audience," he said. "It's not just acting. It's all based in honesty and truth."

"It's an ensemble of 10 people and everyone has very different things to say. It's a living collage of life experiences — a wild, crazy spontaneous night with a fun group of people."

"Too Much Light" has been a Chicago institution since 1988 and came to Manhattan in the mid-1990s for a brief run. Neo-Futurists who might be familiar to Brooklynites include Boerum Hill residents Aryn Halliday, an author, and her husband, Greg Kotis — who won a 2002 Tony for his little project called "Urinetown: The Musical" (which started another Neo-Futurist, Spencer Kuylen).

"Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind" continues every Friday and Saturday night at 11:30 pm at the Brooklyn Lyceum (227 Fourth Ave. at President Street in Park Slope, 718-670-7234). Doors open at 10:30 pm. Admission is \$9 plus the roll of a single, six-sided die (\$10-\$15 total). For more information, log onto www.neo-futurists.org.

Cop catches bank bandit

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A Brooklyn Heights beat officer chased down a suspected bank robber Friday.

Patrolling in a scooter on March 27, Officer Brian Karuschkat, 27, raced off towards the Independence Community Bank at the corner of Court Street and Atlantic Avenue in Cobble Hill when the call came in about the heist just after 3 pm.

As Karuschkat, who is usually assigned to bike patrol along Montague Street, headed towards the scene of the crime in the neighboring 76th Precinct, a call came in over the police radio describing the bandit as 6 feet tall, wearing jeans, a dark jacket and white sneakers.

When a man fitting that description ran by Karuschkat, the officer gave chase in his three-wheeled scooter and followed him down Smith Street. The 6-foot-2 Karuschkat caught up to the suspect at Baltic Street and slapped handcuffs on him before he even had a chance to run.

The suspected bank thief handed over the stolen cash, which he had stashed in a black plastic bag. The mayhem began just before 3 pm, when David Danich, 37, of Manhattan, allegedly walked into

See BANDIT on page 4



Officer Brian Karuschkat, outside the Independence Community Bank at 130 Court St.



Bay Ridge Irish

Kelly and Madison Mahoney enjoyed Sunday's Bay Ridge St. Patrick's parade along the neighborhood's Fifth Avenue.

Women ready for some football

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

During the workweek she litigates; on weekends, she crushes bones.

Lawyer jokes aside, Lynn Lewis, the 175-pound lawyer cum linebacker for the New York Sharks professional women's tackle football team, said her two passions suit her like cease and desist, law and order, block and tackle.

"I'm pretty tough, so it's very aggressive," she said. "And being a lawyer, you gotta be tough, so the two go together, I guess."

Lewis, a Bay Ridge resident who since 1999 has been roughing it in the Independent Women's Football League (IWFL), will strap on the shoulder pads for her first game of the season on Saturday, April 3, when she and the Sharks face the Atlanta Xplosion in Queens.

But Lewis, who shares the field with Veronica Simmons, another Brooklyn-born linewoman, said her sights are set on other foes.

The season, which spans eight games through June, will give the Sharks a second chance to beat the Sacramento Sirens, who last year defeated Lewis and her teammates 41-30 in the IWFL Championship game, the league's Super Bowl. The loss surprised Lewis, whose team was the defending champion and ended

the regular season undefeated.

"When that game comes, we will win," she said, boldly predicting this season's first meeting between the teams.

The 44-year-old Bay Ridge native and Fort Hamilton High School alum has torped the pigskin since she was a kid, when she competed with the boys in afternoon games of touch football.

Even after her mother scolded her for playing with the boys, Lewis continued, now with a team full of police officers, nurses and stockbrokers.

The Sharks were formed in 2000, after a Manhattan businesswoman scooped it up and added it to more than 20 women's tackle teams nationwide. In Lewis' first-ever game with the team, the Sharks beat the Minnesota Vixens 12-6, proving that New York was ready for some football.

Besides the 5-foot-8 Lewis, at least five other Brooklynites play on the Sharks, including Rose Addison, of Bay Ridge; Darleen Hall, of Park Slope; Lori DeVivio, of Marine Park; and Virginia "Chachi" Leon, a Coney Island-born running back now living on Staten Island.

"We have more Brooklyn roots this year in terms of coaching," said Lewis, whose Sharks

See FOOTBALL on page 6



Linebacker Lynn Lewis, of Bay Ridge, at practice on the Fort Hamilton High School athletic field in Bay Ridge Sunday. Lewis plays for the New York Sharks, a women's tackle football team.

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Producer: Marty's a BCAT hog



Borough President Markowitz at last Sunday's St. Patrick's Parade in Bay Ridge. A complaint charges he manipulates BCAT programming.

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

A Brooklyn cable-access television producer has filed a petition with the state charging that Borough President Marty Markowitz dominates what are supposed to be public airwaves.

And, apparently, he's already seeing results.

Since the petition was filed against Brooklyn Community Access Television (BCAT) on March 5, six of eight time slots filled by the Markowitz-produced "Everything Brooklyn" show have been pulled from the network, according to a lawyer for Ronin Amano, the cable access producer who filed the complaint.

In his petition to the Public Service Commission, Amano, producer and co-founder of the program "Rent Wars News" accuses Markowitz and the publicly funded—and federally mandated—BCAT, of squeezing out his tenant-rights program and dozens of other shows to make room for more Borough Hall-driven production.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) oversees utilities and public access television.

"That's like Rudy Giuliani coming into the Brooklyn Museum of Art, ripping up the artwork and fir-

ing the curators," said Amano, referring to the controversy over the "Sensation" exhibit in 2000.

"Don't get me wrong," he said, "this may be an issue of the people under Marty really not understanding how threatening co-opting a public forum can be."

Through a spokeswoman, Markowitz, a former tenant leader who twice has appeared as a guest on "Rent Wars News," declined to comment.

"It would be inappropriate for us to comment on the judicial process with respect to this matter at this time," said Sharon Toomer, a spokeswoman for Markowitz.

"We feel that the petition is without merit," said BCAT spokeswoman JoAnne Meyers.

Thomas Hillgardner, the Queens-based lawyer representing Amano, said that since January "Everything Brooklyn," a program conceived and produced by Markowitz, State cable regulations also require that programming is aired on a first-come, first-served basis, which Hillgardner said likely hasn't happened at BCAT.

The petition, if successful, would benefit shows like "Ghetto-nomics," "Alexandra's Psychic Eyes," "100 Ways to Cope with Stress" and "Talking to My Mom," each suffering from a deci-

sion by BCAT to eliminate "double-slotting" Friday through Monday.

But Meyers countered that they're running the station by the book. "BCAT's actions have been completely consistent and in accordance with its programming policies, the franchise agreement between the city and the franchisees, the PSC approval of those franchises, the PSC rules and regulations and federal and state law," said Meyers.

BCAT officials said they could not comment further while the petition was being considered.

Hillgardner is no stranger to filing complaints against public access networks.

Executives and spokespersons at Queens Public TV, Manhattan Neighborhood Network and Great Neck's Public Access Television Corporation, declined to comment for this article, citing current litigation or complaints filed against them by Hillgardner.

In cases pending in the state Court of Appeals against QPTV and MNN, Hillgardner is seeking to reverse lower court decisions and compel the Public Service Commission to turn over records indicating the producer of every show broadcast and when they first requested to

be put on the air. In doing so he hopes to show that the networks did not follow a first-come, first-served policy.

If he is successful he would use that precedent to get BCAT to open up its records or to get the information from the PSC in the hope of proving that Markowitz was given preferential treatment with regards to time slots and air-

time.

Hillgardner is representing Amano in his complaint against BCAT pro bono on behalf of the Association of Cable Access Producers.

Since 1992, the publicly funded BCAT has offered what Hillgardner and others describe as a soapbox to Brooklynites, offering a stage for such multifarious offerings as hip-hop, self-discovery and the perennial presidential candi-

diate Lyndon LaRouche.

When "Rent Wars News" premiered in 2001, it aired at 10:30 am and 6:30 pm on Mondays. The show follows housing court issues faced by tenants and homeowners, most of whom cannot afford their own lawyers.

"I never expected to sue Marty Markowitz," said Amano. "I like him, he's a former tenant activist. But everyone is coming to me and saying, your friend is running BCAT."

Billion dollar suit over Holocaust artwork sales

By William J. Kolo
Associated Press

Using a musty bank vault as a backdrop, a prominent American lawyer announced Thursday he was filing a \$1 billion lawsuit on behalf of Holocaust victims whose precious artworks were stolen by the Nazis and sold off after World War II.

Edward D. Fagan, a New York-based attorney who has fought for reparations for American blacks who are descendants of slaves and for victims of South Africa's apartheid system, said the suit would be filed later Thursday in U.S. District Court in New York.

The suit, brought by a new group calling itself the Association of Holocaust Victims for the Restitu-

tion of Artwork and Masterpieces, calls on two leading Austrian banks, the Austrian government and Sotheby's auction house to return paintings and other works allegedly sold without the permission of their original Jewish owners.

"Not one painting has been returned—not one," Fagan said, contending the missing artworks include paintings by Monet, Cézanne, Delacroix and other Impressionist masters. "These victims are suing to recover their property."

The plaintiffs, who were not identified by name, were said to include several dozen families, mostly Jews, from Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Germany, Israel, Poland, Switzerland, the United States and other countries.

Their suit, alleging "the system-

atic theft of great artwork, masterpieces and collections," seeks between \$100 million and \$1 billion (U.S. currency) in damages if the artworks—valued at between \$2 million and \$5 million (U.S.) apiece—cannot be returned.

"We would like the paintings back, but the likelihood is not so good," Fagan said.

At a press conference in a Vienna cafe, Fagan showed reporters a sketch he said was drawn by an unidentified former employee of Bank Austria-Creditanstalt, purportedly showing the location of a secret vault concealed beneath a trap door that he said was the priceless paintings unclaimed after the war.

He then led several dozen jour-

nals on a walk to the bank's near-

by headquarters, where flustered officials agreed to unlock the cellar and open several vaults. None contained anything more than old books and dusty boxes of documents and files.

Nonplussed, Fagan said he never expected to sue artworks, which he contended were sold off by Sotheby's and other auction houses with the complicity of Bank Austria-Creditanstalt, Erste Bank and the Austrian government, which he said issued export licenses allowing the works to leave the country.

The works' rightful owners, he said, were mostly Jews who perished in the Holocaust—the Nazis' extermination of 6 million people.

Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in 1938, one year before

the war began in Europe.

"We are accusing the banks of engaging in the trafficking of stolen Holocaust artwork," Fagan said. "It's not sufficient to say, 'We don't have anything.' A New York court is going to say, 'Well, you've got something—show me.'"

The 16-page lawsuit alleges that the banks' developed systems and schemes through which they collected, took title to and/or profited from artwork... which the defendant Austrian banks knew, had reason to know and/or upon the exercise of reasonable diligence could have discovered were stolen from Holocaust victims."

Bank Austria, which recently merged with Creditanstalt, paid \$45 million (U.S.) in 1999 to settle a lawsuit brought by Fagan on behalf

of Jews whose gold and other financial assets were stolen by the Nazis and allegedly fell into the bank's hands after the war.

Spokesman Peter Thier said the bank was eager to cooperate in any way and show it does not possess artworks or other valuables seized by the Nazis.

He said the bank was working closely with an independent historical commission set up in the mid-1990s to handle claims by victims of Nazi looting.

Oliver Rathkolb, a ranking member of the commission, told the Austria Press Agency there was "no evidence of a connection between art theft" and the bank.

"We have no problem with exposing the truth. We want to be as transparent as possible," Thier said,

conceding that if proof exists that the bank was involved in illegal sales of artwork, "it would be a catastrophe."

A respected Austrian newspaper, Der Standard, reported Thursday that one of the disputed masterpieces is "Mount Sinai," an oil by El Greco that surfaced a decade ago at an open market in Vienna, only to disappear until it was auctioned by Sotheby's for \$5 million (U.S.) five years ago.

Fagan said he was pressing the Austrian government for a list of export licenses issued for all paintings that left the country between 1945 and 1998. He told the Associated Press he also was in contact with the U.S. Justice Department and the White House about possible involvement.

Real Answer to Social Promotion

By Randi Weingarten

Social promotion doesn't work. No one knows this better than teachers, particularly those who find themselves in classrooms with children who don't have the basic knowledge and skills they need to do grade-level work. The UFT took an official stance against this practice long before Mayor Giuliani made it an issue, much less Mayor Bloomberg.

But teachers also know that while the politically easy answer—a "get tough" retention policy—may score political points for a mayor or chancellor, it doesn't really offer much to the students who are struggling. Making third-graders who didn't get it the first time sit through the same curriculum in the same classroom again has been tried. The evidence is overwhelming that students who are simply held back and not provided with enriched opportunities to learn generally don't make significant academic progress and are at increased risk of dropping out in later years.

"Conditional" 4th grade

There are very concrete, common-sense ways to end social promotion. Early and dramatic intervention, as early as pre-kindergarten, is one approach. Another is the proposal the UFT put forward in response to the Mayor's plan to establish a "gate" for this year's 3rd graders. Under our plan the system would create "conditional" 4th grade classes next year for third-graders who score at Level 1—the lowest range—in reading or math.

Such conditional classes would be capped at 15 students instead of the 28 or more that we currently have in our 4th grade. The classes would be taught by highly trained teachers and would provide a specialized curriculum

for struggling students. And instead of giving such students just a few hours a week or a few months of help, our proposal would give students a full year of enriched academic and support services.

The instructional program would be tailored for the needs of students who have not gained basic skills, with less structured approaches. At the same time, the program would also be specific to the needs of students. For example, it makes no sense to restrict a child to 3rd grade math or making him repeat 3rd grade science simply because his English reading skills are poor. This is particularly important for English language learners who might be doing better in math than in reading in a language that is unfamiliar to them.

Ed Koch, who was mayor when the city first tried its "gates" program in the 1980s, has praised this approach.

Is intervention—in this or some other form—a better strategy than retention? The Chicago school system, after a seven-year experiment with holding students back, has eased its strict promotion requirements. Why? Because an independent study of the policy has demonstrated that retention alone has not improved student performance.

Taking the 4th grade test

Another benefit of the UFT approach is that the conditional 4th graders would take the state's 4th grade test, making it easier to compare the progress of this group with their peers. (Under Mayor Bloomberg's plan, the students who are held back would take the city's 3rd grade test next year.)

While conditional 4th grade classes should help move large



numbers of children out of the lowest level by the end of the school year, those students who are still unsuccessful would be retained in a 4th grade class but with a guarantee that they will receive additional services. We propose that each of those children have an Individual Academic Services Plan similar to the Individual Education Plan that is used for special education students. They also would receive instruction both before and after school, along with other assistance promised by the chancellor.

The UFT offered this proposal as a way of helping children, and also to quell the cynicism that the process was being rigged to ensure higher test scores for 4th graders next year when the Mayor will be seeking re-election. But we do not think that it is the only approach that could work. Others have also offered thoughtful alternatives. The administration, however, is not interested in listening to any alternatives at all. In fact, Mayor Bloomberg had to fire two members of his Panel for Educational Policy—and engineer the firing of a third member by the Staten Island borough president—to ensure that his plan—and only his plan—got a hearing.

Is our approach expensive? It's probably less expensive than swelling existing 3rd-grade enrollment by 30 percent, which could be the cost of the Department of Education's proposed approach.

Besides, instruction is supposed to determine the budget, not vice versa. Serving the needs of children must be the main concern and driving force behind any educational policy initiative—not politics.



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Deputy chancellor welcomes successor

**Marcia Lyles
fills Farina's
Region 8 spot**

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Principals, teachers and parents gathered Monday night to bid farewell to one local public education leader and greet another.

Carmen Farina, who earlier this month was appointed second in command to Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, said her goodbyes to Region 8 as she introduced her replacement, Dr. Marcia Lyles.

Farina replaced Diana Lam two weeks ago as the Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning.

Lyles has been teaching in New York City public schools for 28 years and until this month served as the Local Instructional Superintendent for Region 8 and before the system was restructured, as superintendent of District 16, covering portions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville.

"I couldn't have said yes if I didn't think I was leaving Region 8 not only in good hands, but in better hands," Farina said as she passed the microphone over to Lyles at a public meeting at St. Francis College, on Remsen Street in Brooklyn Heights on March 29.



Carmen Farina, second in command at the Department of Education, introduces her Region 8 replacement, Dr. Marcia Lyles, Monday night.

Districts 13, 14, 15 and 16, including Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Sunset Park, Red Hook, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn, Fort Greene, DUMBO, Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, Williamsburg, Greenpoint, and portions of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights, were merged into Region 8 under Mayor Michael Bloomberg's sweeping upheaval of the city's school system.

Since July, Lyles has supervised elementary, middle and high schools in Region 8 under Farina.

Under the mayor's new system, the 32 former school districts have been consolidated into 10 regional divisions guided by one of the 10 regional superintendents. Those regional superintendents oversee a group of local instructional supervisors, who oversee no more than a dozen schools.

Those superintendents are headquartered at 10 new learning support centers located

throughout the city.

Previously, Lyles worked as assistant principal at Erasmus Hall High School and principal at Paul Robeson High School, in Crown Heights. Under her leadership Paul Robeson HS was named a Redbook magazine "America's Best Schools Project Winner" for classroom innovation.

As superintendent of District 16 she created four new middle schools and redesigned professional development for teachers and administrators.

Lyles has also worked as an English teacher at Washington Irving High School, in Manhattan, served as an English teacher at Curtis High School in Staten Island, and worked for the superintendent of Brooklyn and Staten Island Schools (BASIS).

Farina's predecessor, Diana Lam, resigned amid a cloud of controversy after an investigation found she had helped her husband get a job in the department without going through the proper conflict of interest channels.

Farina has been working in

the city's public schools for more than 38 years. As a curriculum coordinator in District 15 she authored a multicultural program that was replicated in every district in the city.

"I believe all children must have equal opportunity," Lyles told about 150 parents and educators in attendance Monday. She graduated from Hunter College in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She earned a master's in English from New York University in 1976 and a doctorate from the Teachers College at Columbia University in 1992.

"She did great things for the district," Nica Lali, PTA president of PS 107, on Eighth Avenue and 13th Street in Park Slope, said of Farina. She said she came to meet Lyles Monday to learn "who would be making decisions" in the district.

Asked what she hoped to bring to the Department of Education, Farina motioned to the people around her.

"The feeling of community in this room," she said. "I want to take it citywide."

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April 14, 10:00 AM
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Americana Rest. (Bi-Lingual)
6501 7th Ave.
Btwn. 65th & 66th St.

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April 16, 10:00 AM
Toomey's Diner
252 Empire Blvd.
Cross St./Rogers Ave.

Brooklyn
April 20, 10:00 AM
Lindenwood Diner (Bi-Lingual)
2870 Linden Blvd.
Btwn. 78th & Amber St.

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April 22, 10:00 AM
Mirage Diner
717 Kings Hwy.
Cross St./E. 8th St.

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Vegas Diner
1619 86th St.
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Con Ed shuts Vinegar boiler

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Residents of Vinegar Hill and DUMBO breathed a sigh of relief this week when Con Edison announced it would be pulling the plug for good on one of the city's most highly polluting power generators.

That generator, known as Boiler 100, is located in Vinegar Hill just a stone's throw from hundreds of residents, a school, and the Farnag House, a public housing development.

The controversial generator will be taken out of service in October when a three-year special permit expires on Oct. 1, according to D. Joy Faber, a spokeswoman for Con Edison.

"This is absolutely great news for all of us," said Monique Denocin, vice president of the Vinegar Hill As-

sociation, which has been fighting for years to close the "dirty" site.

Located at the Hudson Avenue Station, near the westernmost edge of the Navy Yard, Boiler 100, one of five generators on the site, was built in 1951.

The generator burns oil and produces steam that is pumped into Manhattan. It was considered one of the most polluting power plants in the city before it was taken offline in 1997.

The neighborhoods within a five-mile radius would be most affected by emissions from the plant, according to Lisa Garcia, an attorney for the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPARG). Within that radius are Vinegar Hill, DUMBO, Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill and Fort Greene.

But following the blackouts that

devastated California in 2001, Con Edison sought a permit to reopen the site using emission credits it had received for closing the facility just four years earlier.

That outraged the community, which argued that the company should have to comply to a new standard set by the federal Clean Air Act.

After several protests, Con Edison reopened the facility with a three-year permit from the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

A spokeswoman for Con Edison said this week that the company would not seek a renewal of the permit and reiterated that the boiler has "always operated in compliance with the DEC guidelines."

"This is a major victory for the community," said Garcia, who helped file a lawsuit last year on be-

half of the community to demand that the generator comply with more updated standards.

"It was their pressure that got Con Edison to this point. I think now the pressure needs to stay on Con Edison from the community and elected officials so they do not attempt to restart it," Garcia added.

Some residents said they were skeptical that Con Edison would really keep the generator closed this time, after it made a similar announcement and then reopened the plant.

"It was unknown to us that the boiler was a very polluting one," said Denocin. "And one day three years ago, there was an article on the front page of the New York Times talking about our Con Edison plant and they called the boiler one of the worst in New York City."

Rachel Gold, chief of staff for

Brooklyn Heights state Sen. Martin Connor said the closure marked a huge feat for the community.

"It also creates a good-neighbor policy to help build a good relationship between Con Ed and its neighbors," said Gold.

Once predominantly industrial neighborhoods, Vinegar Hill and DUMBO have been attracting more and more residents into recently converted condominiums and luxury apartment buildings.

Rep. Nydia Velázquez, whose district includes the Brooklyn waterfront, has been asking Con Edison to close the generator for years.

"This is great for the community," said Velázquez. "Con Edison's decision to shut down the plant at the end of the temporary, three-year DEC permit will mean closing one of the oldest, dirtiest boilers in the city."

New headmaster at Saint Ann's set

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

The private Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn Heights has announced a successor to its founding headmaster.

Dr. Lawrence Weiss, who for seven years headed the Upper Division of the Horace Mann School in Rye, will replace Stanley Bosworth, 76, a driving force in the success of the Pier-report Street school.

Bosworth, who will step down in July, had announced his retirement five months ago.

He played a major role in shaping the 39-year-old institution's creative and far-reaching curriculum, which eschews both grades and ranking.

Weiss, 54, has served as the director of the Studies program at the Sidwell Friends School, in Washington, D.C., where President Bill Clinton's daughter, Chelsea, attended.

He began his career in education as a history teacher at



Dr. Lawrence Weiss

the nearby Brooklyn Friend's School in Downtown Brooklyn.

"Larry brings to us a depth

of experience, richness of intellect, and a commitment to the special qualities that characterize Saint Ann's," said Ann Ash, president of the school's board of the trustees.

The board spent the past five months searching for a headmaster to replace Bosworth and offered the position to Weiss last week.

Saint Ann's has a student body of 1,067 in pre-school through twelfth grade.

The non-sectarian school was founded in 1965 with 63 students and seven teachers in the basement of St. Ann's Episcopal Church.

In 1982, the school formally disaffiliated from the church.

Bosworth, who plans on writing a book, says he will remain closely involved in the school after his retirement.

He also has one daughter and three grandchildren currently enrolled there.

Asked about the legacy he leaves behind at the school, Bosworth said, "We've led children into loving school and doing what they do best."



Crying, 'Fire'

With the city's revenues on the rise, Borough President Marty Markowitz (center) joined members of Brooklyn's City Council delegation at City Hall on Thursday in calling on Mayor Michael Bloomberg to reopen the borough's five firehouses that were closed due to budget cuts.

FURMAN...

Continued from page 1

"I would very much like to see a portion of the revenue [from 360 Furman St.] go towards the park maintenance," Brooklyn Heights Councilman David Vasyk told The Papers after the property went on sale last summer.

Vasyk also sent a letter in January, as did the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy (formerly the Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition) to the Watchtower Society in January, asking that the buyer be required to contribute to the park.

"It is clear that the commitment to create Brooklyn Bridge Park has substantially increased the value of 360 Furman Street," the letter read. The 1 million-square-foot property, which stands next to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, is currently zoned for light manufacturing.

The buyer would have to seek a variance from the city in order to develop the property for any other use.

According to some estimates the religious society, also known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, paid approximately \$10 million for the building in 1983. Built in 1928, the building is currently used for storage, shipping and laundry services for 3,000 Watchtower Society members.

Most of those operations will be consolidated at 117 Adams St., while the group's printing operations are relocating to Walkkill, N.Y.

The Watchtower Society owns 31 buildings in Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO totaling nearly 3 million square feet.

David Semonin, a spokesman for the Watchtower Society, declined to comment on the sale.

Many real estate experts believe converting the property into condos with sweeping views of Manhattan would be most lucrative.

Inside 360 Furman St., columns are spaced about every 20 to 25 feet. Ten-foot by 15-foot windows flood the floors with light. The first, second and third floors are connected by a mile-and-a-half of conveyor belts, which transfer books that are to be shipped around the world. Last year alone, 37.5 million pounds of literature and videos were distributed from the Furman Street building to international and domestic locations.

The building is shaped like a giant letter 'H' with the east-west core holding 14 freight elevators, some big enough to carry 30-foot trucks. Like other Watchtower Society structures, the building is in good shape and has an in-house maintenance crew that regularly paints and cleans it.

"We feel that whatever happens to the building should be sensitive to Brooklyn Bridge Park and reflect the increased value the park will bring to the building," said Janet Patterson, a spokeswoman for the city Economic Development Corporation.

Patterson declined to comment on any discussions between the city and the seller and buyer over future use of the building.

The Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corp., an offshoot of the Empire State Development Corp., did not return telephone calls seeking comment on the role the building may play in the park.

"To be a good neighbor to Brooklyn Bridge Park, a redeveloped 360 Furman must be integrated into the park's overall design," said Sharon Soons, a spokeswoman for the conservancy.

"To be an outstanding neighbor, the developers should contribute funds to the park's development and operation, and provide housing opportunities to low- and middle-income families," Soons added.

BANDIT...

Continued from page 1

the bank branch at 130 Court St. and passed a note to a teller demanding cash.

Daniels held up a black plastic bag to suggest that he had a gun, police said, adding that the teller passed back \$1,717 and Daniels fled out the front door.

Just a few weeks ago, the same bank was held up by a man fitting Daniels' description, police said.

On March 12, a man entered the Independence branch and passed a note to the teller asking for cash. The bandit made off with more than \$2,000.

Capt. Philip Stierza, commanding officer of the 84th Precinct, commended Karuschkat this week, noting his timely response, observation skills and quick police work.

"He did exactly what he is supposed to do," Stierza said.

Karuschkat, a five-year veteran of the force assigned to the community policing unit at the 84th Precinct, said he didn't think twice about going after the suspect, but did fear that the fleeing bandit might be carrying a weapon.

"I just wanted to get him restrained as quick as possible," Karuschkat said, adding that he did not have to pull out his weapon. "There wasn't much of a fight."

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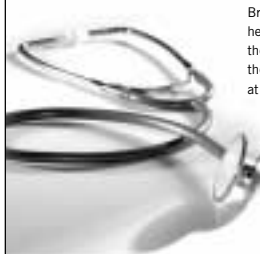
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Target startles burglars

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

When a pair of bold thieves broke into an apartment at Union Street and Fifth Avenue they probably didn't expect to find the owner sitting in the living room.

But that's exactly what they

78 PCT. BLOTTER

encountered when they entered the rear door of the building at 2:35 pm on March 29.

The less-than-dynamic duo turned right around when they

saw the 34-year-old resident, bolting back out the door towards Fourth Avenue, police said.

Easy entry

Through the rear window. That's how one thief most likely broke into an apartment on Prospect Park West between 13th and 14th streets, police said.

The window is adjacent to a fire escape and police believe the thief used the opening to both enter and exit the apartment.

The sneaky robber made off with a laptop computer valued at \$2,500 and a Canon Rebel camera valued at \$300.

Visitor hosed

A well-heeled Southern woman with a taste for fine leather accessories and pantyhose was out of luck this week when a thief broke into her brand new white Oldsmobile. The 45-year-old victim from Decatur, Ga., parked her

2004 sedan on St. Johns Place near Sixth Avenue at 9 pm on March 27.

But when she returned at 9:30 pm the next day, she discovered the car missing along with a Louis Vuitton purse and wallet, valued at \$895 and \$395, respectively.

The thief also made off with five bottles of perfume, four pairs of shoes and 36 pairs of pantyhose, police said.

Export only

While products at an import-export business usually move in and out, this week they just moved out at one Gowanus office.

A 37-year-old business owner with an operation on 10th Street and Second Avenue told police that somebody broke the latch on the front door and made off with a laptop computer, valued at \$2,500, and a CD player worth \$50.

Buyer's remorse

A woman shopping at a Fifth Avenue grocery store got an unpleasant surprise when she went to pay for her goods.

The victim, 28, placed her wallet in a shopping cart when she entered the store at Butler Street, at 4:40 pm on March 29.

Twenty minutes later the Park Slope resident realized that her designer Prada wallet along with \$40 in cash, as well as credit cards and her driver's license, had been snatched somewhere in the store.

Turned to glass

What a pity to trade a luxury automobile for a pile of glass.

But that's exactly what happened to a 35-year-old woman when she parked her car at Prospect Park West and Fourth Street.

The motorist left her 2002 BMW there at 8 pm on March 26. But when she returned three hours later, she found nothing but shards of glass where her shining car once stood.

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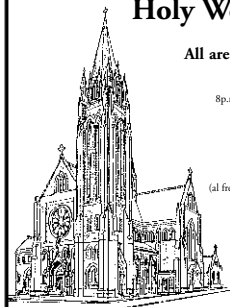
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Friday, April 9th: Good Friday

10a.m. Morning Prayer

3p.m. Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

(veneration of the Cross)

7:30p.m. El Via Crucis en Español

(al fresco según lo permitan las condiciones del tiempo).

Saturday, April 10th: Holy Saturday

8p.m. Solemn Easter Vigil Mass

Sunday, April 11th: Easter Sunday

9:30a.m. English Mass and children's Liturgy

11a.m. Misa en Español

12:15p.m. English Mass

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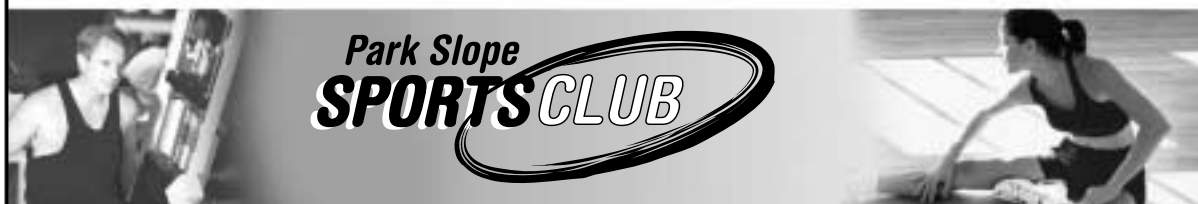
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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

April 3, 2004



Deluxe edition

'Accidental Nostalgia' is one sexy, outrageous operetta

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

Cynthia Hopkins' "Accidental Nostalgia," now on stage at St. Ann's Warehouse, is billed as an "operetta about the pros and cons of amnesia."

But it is really an exploration of how we create ourselves through what we choose to remember and what we choose to forget. Hopkins, a Bessie award- and two-time Obie award-winner who has written the book, composed the music and produced the show, stars as Henrietta Bill, a neurologist and author suffering from psychogenic amnesia who sings her way into the dark recesses of her past. (She also plays the accordion, from time to time.)

Hopkins is ably directed by DJ Mendel, who obviously knows how to make the irrational not only understandable, but in some eccentric way, logical.

Returning to her hometown, Henrietta answers various mysteries in her life: Who is her real father? Has she killed him? Is he alive or dead? Has he abused her, and why? She also discovers, after walking down a few

THEATER

"Accidental Nostalgia" plays through April 4, Thursday through Saturday at 8 pm and Sunday at 7 pm at St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St. at Dock Street in DUMBO. Tickets are \$25. For tickets or more information, call (718) 224-8779 or visit www.artiststern.com or www.ticketweb.com.

blind alleys — and a trip to Morocco — who she really is.

Hopkins' sweet, simple, but highly evocative voice is backed by her alt-country band, Gloria Deluxe, composed of trombone and guitar (Curtis Hasselbring); drums (Kristin Mueller); bass (Josh Stark); violin, guitar and spoons (Philippa Thompson); and viola (Karen Waluch).

Gloria Deluxe is a familiar band to Brooklynites who may have seen their raucous sets at Celebrate Brooklyn, the BAMCafe and Pete's Candy Store.

The music the band plays is a subtle blending of country, blues and jazz, with strains that sound like anything from Kurt Weill to Klezmer. The lyrics have the down-and-out



Remember when: The author and star of "Accidental Nostalgia," Cynthia Hopkins, explores the "pros and cons of amnesia" in her new operetta now on stage at St. Ann's Warehouse. (Above) Hopkins with Jeff Sugg.

quality of blues and the piercing poetry of Bob Dylan.

They abound with lines like: "It was like trying to catch a dark cloud with a butterfly net" and "I was like trying to walk across freshly fallen snow without leaving tracks," or "I must have rocks instead of a brain/I make the same mistakes again and again/I get outta trouble just to get back in."

Although "Accidental Nostalgia" is basically a one-woman show, Hopkins is supported onstage by two factotums (Jim Findlay and Jeff Sugg) dressed in the funky vest-over-bare-chest

attire usually associated with musicians or DJs, or a Bob Fosse revue. They occasionally dance with her, or throw her a change of clothing, or interact with her in a very sensual manner.

Hopkins is also backed by a videoscape, created by designers Findlay and Sugg, diagrams and pictures displayed on a suspended screen. The video of her father, played by real life dad John Hopkins, reading his explanatory and exculpatory letter is particularly effective and affecting.

Kristen Lapham and Tara Webb have dressed Hopkins in clothing that is bizarre, to say the least. For some reason, she wears keepapads, bandages on her hands and a kind of tunic over a jacket. At one point she strips and stands naked before the audience, then dresses in new clothing, to clearly demonstrate that she has taken on another identity.

Which brings us to nudity on stage — seldom necessary, rarely justified, always eclipsing every other aspect of a production. It's too bad this one act of self-indulgence mars an otherwise perfect performance.

In fact, despite the utter, shocking weirdness that characterizes much of this show, all of its elements seem perfectly in place and perfectly appropriate. Such is the genius of "Accidental Nostalgia's" conception and execution.

"Accidental Nostalgia" is the kind of theater that does for the stage what the Big Bang did for the universe — create an explosive chain reaction that keeps producing light and life and is capable of infinite transformation.



The doctor is out (of her mind): Hopkins stars as Henrietta Bill, a neurologist suffering from psychogenic amnesia in "Accidental Nostalgia."



DANCE

It's a 'Mystery'

Longtime dancer and choreographer Lynn Parkerson founded Brooklyn Ballet, in Brooklyn Heights, in 2000. The organization began an active schedule last season, including an educational outreach program, "Elevate," in five Brooklyn schools.

On April 4, Parkerson's company will perform "Mystery Sonatas," inspired by the works of 17th-century composer Heinrich Biber as part of the 92nd Street Y's Harkness Dance Center series.

"I've worked on this piece for two years and shown parts of it before, but this is the first time we're doing the entire hour-long piece [for an audience]," Parkerson explains. "The Q&A session afterwards is a way for me to get valuable feedback. I hope to premiere the whole piece in Brooklyn next season."

Parkerson is the first to admit that Biber's music might seem a strange choice.

"For a long time it had not been played, and then slowly people started to become interested in it again," she says. "It's an odd piece of music. There are 15 sonata sections, each with a different tuning, so a new arrangement was needed so that the modern violin would not have to be tuned each time." (Gil Morgenstern performs the demanding violin parts.)

Brooklyn Ballet performs "Mystery Sonatas" at the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave., in Manhattan, on April 4 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$10. For more information, visit www.92Y.org. — Kevin Filipski



EVENT

Aaaaaaaah!

Hold on to your lunches.

The iconic Cyclone roller coaster at Astroland Amusement Park in Coney Island will re-open for another season of nerve-unraveling excitement on Sunday, April 4.

Cyclone neophytes, presumably children who are 54-inches tall — the coaster's minimum height requirement — will be allowed to ride for free beginning at noon on Sunday.

Other highlights of the day will include an egg-cream christening of the coaster by Brooklyn Borough President Mary Markowitz at 11:30 am, a performance by the Hungry March Band and face-painters.

Beginning Sunday, Astroland Amusement Park will open at noon, on weekends only, until mid-June, when they'll be open daily, noon to midnight. The Cyclone is located at Surf Avenue at West 10th Street. Tickets to ride the Cyclone are \$5, and \$4 for re-ride tickets. For more information, call (718) 265-2100 or visit www.astroland.com. — Lisa J. Curtis

ART

Stress free

Now through April 8, "PMS" is on display inside the Brooklyn War Memorial.

The exhibition of artworks — rather than the bloating or mood swings — of "women Painters, Musicians and Sculptors" is a stunningly diverse show.

Among the more than 40 artists whose work is on display are Kristen Benson's "TV 2004," a vintage television console with an ant farm — filled with bustling sand harvester ants — behind its screen (pictured), as well as Chanika Svetvits' diorama of flowers formed from fast food wrappers inset into suitcases, and Carmen Hay Koldzey's hand-painted textiles which hang above the stage in the exhibition hall.

"PMS," inside the memorial at 195 Cadman Plaza West in Downtown Brooklyn, is presented by the Brooklyn College Art Gallery in collaboration with the Brooklyn Arts Council, South of the Navy Yard Artists and the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition. Admission is free. For more information, call (718) 951-5181.

— Lisa J. Curtis



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BROOKLYN PAPERS

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week: MYRTLE AVENUE

Castro's

511 Myrtle Ave. at Grand Avenue, (718) 398-1459 (Cash only) Entrees: \$6-\$11.50.
The smell of grilled meats and rice and beans greets customers at Castro's, while the sounds of traditional Mexican music booms from the jukebox up front.

"Customers love our mole poblano because the sauce is homemade," boasts owner Humberto Castro. Chef Alberto Mendoza combines various peppers, toasted sesame seeds, garlic, chocolate, raisins and cinnamon to make this typical Mexican dish.

Vegetarians should try the burrito with broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, zucchini, jack cheese, rice, beans, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, sour cream and guacamole. (Pico de Gallo is served on the side.) All entrees come with chips and salsa and a side of rice and beans. During spring and summer, enjoy a meal in the backyard patio. Castro's also offers an array of breakfast burritos and morning specials. Delivery and takeout available. Open 7 am to 11 pm.

Five Spot Supper Club

459-461 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue, (718) 652-0202, www.fivespotcluboffood.com (Disc. MC, V) Entrees: \$5.95-\$11.95.

A 60-foot bar, hardwood floors and an intricately patterned ceiling decrease Five Spot's dining room, while exposed brick, crushed red velvet and a wood-burning fireplace add to the walls where co-owners Malik and Kim Armstrong have been serving good ol', down home cooking since 1996. Southern fried chicken and fried smothered spare ribs are just two of their popular dishes.

Five Spot offers a daily lunch special for \$5 that includes meat or fish and two side orders and collard greens. Homemade cornbread is served with all dinner entrees. For dessert try Five Spot's individual pecan pie or peach cobbler. In the evening, live music is performed by bands and DJs from the stage in the back corner. Check the Web site for a calendar of upcoming performances. Open for take-out from noon to midnight. Dinner and full bar service begins at 4 pm daily.

Gourmet Kitchen

402 Myrtle Ave. at Vanderbilt Avenue, (718) 445-9422 (Cash only) Lunch entrees: \$5.25-\$12.50.

In traditional diner style, Gourmet Kitchen serves eggs, grits, homemade French toast, pancakes, bacon, sausage and "omelets galore" for breakfast to hungry customers sitting quietly at the counter. They even serve homemade crab salmon cakes on the side if you desire.

For lunch, the menu offers soups, salads and sandwiches, among other entrees. The over-stuffed sandwiches, packed with your choice of either pastami, roast beef or corned beef, and topped with melted Swiss cheese and sauerkraut, are a real treat.

"It is so big that when you go to eat it, you don't even leave a bite mark," says owner Jimmy Iliopoulos. Open for breakfast and lunch.

Joe Turkey

441 Myrtle Ave. at Waverly Avenue, (718) 797-1688 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Lunch entrees: \$4.95-\$7.95.

Decorated in bright colors, Joe Turkey looks just like your own kitchen. The wooden countertop and cabinets hold recipe books and turkey figurines, while the curtain window just above the kitchen sink displays a flower box waiting for warm weather.

The signature dish at Joe Turkey is the whole fried turkey.

"We deep-fry the turkeys in very hot oil for 18 to 24 minutes. The result is much juicier on the inside with a light crisp on the outside," says Joe Turkey owner Alicia Westbrooks. What is most amazing about the turkeys is that they come in 15 different flavors ranging from honey pecan and lemon pepper to peach bourbon and Mexican mole.

Chef Kai Rodighi not only fries whole turkeys, but also whips up a menu of desserts including extra large Krispy treats, cookies, cupcakes and tarts. While Joe Turkey offers limited seating.

★ = Full review available at BrooklynPapers.com

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The especial burrito at Castro's.

Kum Kau

465 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue, (718) 638-1650 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$5.95-\$12.75.

At Kum Kau, anything is possible.

"Customers are free to customize their own diners," boasts manager Peter Cheng. While co-owners and chefs Jimmy and Amy Cheng make all of the sauces, other chefs divide duties depending on their specialties. A favorite at Kum Kau is the crispy baked shrimp with mild spices and rice. On Wednesdays, Kum Kau offers an "all you can eat" buffet for lunch (\$5.99) and dinner (\$10.99) including Chinese cake. Each week the buffet menu changes to allow customers to enjoy various traditional Chinese entrees. Kum Kau offers a special family menu for two or more people including soup, an appetizer, an entree, rice and dessert, all for \$11.95 per person. Takeout and private parties also available. Open daily.

Peaches & Cream Cafe

426 Myrtle Ave. at Clinton Avenue, (718) 852-2243 (Cash only) Entrees: \$4.50. Focaccia: \$5.50. Soups: \$3.50-\$4.75. Ice cream: \$1.95 a scoop, \$2.75 for two, \$4.25 a pint.

Lunchtime brings people in for the paninis, focaccia, soups and salads, and nighttime probably brings them back for a scoop or two of the cafe's homemade ice cream. While the chicken corn chowder and turkey panini with pepper jack cheese and roasted red peppers sounds delicious, let's be frank here — it's the banana ice cream pudding you really want. Or the ginger ice cream with honey graham. Or the strawberry cheesecake ice cream. Heck, get a slice of cream cheese or red velvet cake while you're at it. Individual pies such as the sour cream apple walnut or banana cream are also available. This month, Peaches & Cream will add breakfast paninis to its menu. Open daily.

Thai 101

455A Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue, (718) 852-8165 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$5.95-\$12.95.

The effect of the orange, art-deco lanes reflecting off of Thai 101's crisp, white-painted, exposed brick walls, gives it a modern and airy feel. Thai 101's favorites include deep-fried duck or fish served with their special house sauce, mixed vegetables and pineapple. Also popular is the pad Thai because customers have the option of eating it with beef or chicken or even a vegetarian or shrimp. Anything can be added to any meal to suit the desired tastes of Thai 101 customers. For dessert, owner Angela Chou recommends the FBI, also known as Fried Banana ice cream, or the pumpkin custard. Lunch specials served daily for \$4.95. Open Monday through Saturday for lunch and dinner. Sundays for dinner only.

Zaytoon's

472 Myrtle Ave. at Washington Avenue, (718) 823-5522 (AmEx, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$4.50-\$14.

According to Zagat, co-owners and chefs Ahmad Samhan and Farid Assad, serve the No. 1 Middle-Eastern food in New York City. Tapestries and antique lamps adorn exposed brick and warm, red walls, while brightly patterned fabric covers coffee benches, couches and chairs. The chicken skewers, lemon-marinated chicken from the rotisserie served with rice and salad and a choice of hummus or babganooush, has been a customer favorite since the restaurant opened in December 2002. Another favorite among customers is Zaytoon's variety of pizzas, a combination of pizza and pita. (All of Zaytoon's pita is made fresh to order.) Try the lamb/pita pizza, covered in lamb, beef, onions, tomatoes, parsley and spices. A belly dancer performs two shows every other Friday. (Reservations are recommended on those nights.) Takeout, delivery and catering available. Open daily.

—compiled by Chiara Cowan



Cold comfort

Green Paradise serves up an array of raw food entrees

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Papers

Halfway through a multi-course tasting dinner at Green Paradise, a raw foods restaurant in Prospect Heights, my husband said, "I've never tasted anything like this."

The "like" was a faux "pizza" with a nut crust, and pepper and pineapple toppings, one of several raw food wondrous we sampled that tried hard to mimic the real thing.

The restaurant's chef and owner, Marvule Jobe-Simon, is a vegan and

While a raw food meal isn't prepared the traditional way — over a stove or in the oven — it's far from a simple slice-and-dice affair. Before a meal hits the table, ingredients are whirled in a food processor or blender, whipped in a Vita-Mix; and grains are opened in a "sprouter" (a layered contraption in which seeds — alfalfa, broccoli, mung beans and radishes, to name a few — are watered and in two to four days, sprouts are sprung). Fruit and vegetables are reduced to their essence in a dehydrator.

What emerges are raw food imposters of dishes so ingrained in our minds to taste a certain way, that anything trying to mimic their flavors will disappoint us. As anyone who has ever eaten a "veggie burger" — hoping to enjoy it as much as

the fabulous, fatty beef thing off the grill — will tell you, simply giving a dish a familiar name, as Jobe-Simon has done, doesn't make it so.

"Pasta" made of shredded zucchini doesn't make it pasta, and calling a dish layered with ground nuts, faux cheese and dehydrated tomatoes a "pizza" won't fool anyone, either.

Raw food enthusiasts say that their cuisine should be appreciated without comparison to the delicious, unhealthy SAD (standard American diet) foods most of us enjoy.

I agree in theory, but bad-for-you food is my only point of reference. Without the aid of heat to soften flavors and crisp textures, and no butter to enrich sauces, Jobe-Simon works hard to blend flavors. He grinds pecans and mixes them with olive oil, cilantro and a touch of or-



ange juice, then adds a smoky finish with dried chipotle pepper for a hearty (nothing I tasted could be described as light) hot, spicy and smoky dip.

Celery stalks were used in place of crackers.

The falafel, made of chickpeas and sunflower seeds, looked and tasted like balls of dark rye bread, although their cashew sauce was pleasantly creamy and nutty.

The best dish of the evening was the sweet and sour plantain salad served as a side dish with the falafel. Slices of the sweet banana were tossed with lemon juice and olive oil and brightened with parsley.

Whole mushrooms marinated in pineapple juice and ginger, served in a lush Brazil nut and garlic cream sauce, were delectable — firm yet tender and with the heat of the ginger adding a kick to the sauce.

I enjoyed the nutty flavor of a wild rice salad seasoned with lots of garlic and olive oil, but not its texture. The grain is soaked, not simmered, until it sprouts. I'll be kind and say it was chewy. Two forksful gave my mouth a workout.

There was an odd "pizza," with layers of macadamia nut "cheese," a sauce made of dehydrated tomatoes that tasted like good tomato paste mixed with green, red and yellow peppers, olives, mushroom slices; and

pineapple (I liked the pineapple) spread over a dense chickpea and sunflower seed crust. As a vegetarian offering, it wasn't bad, but even with the pineapple, I wanted it served warm and I was in the wrong place for that.

The disaster of the evening was the banana pancakes. They looked dark and damp and tasted like batter that came off the grill too soon. A tart, well-made raspberry sauce and banana slices were a welcome relief.

Two of the three "sweet pies" were satisfying dessert choices. (The third, flavored with pods from the mesquite tree, had no flavor.) For my mango pie, Jobe-Simon grinds walnuts with dates for a sweet, chewy crust. He then tops the crust with a delicious mango pudding and scatters fresh raspberries on top. In another dessert, with the same crust, he layers slices of bananas and tops it with a fluffy banana-and-coconut pudding and a crunchy topping of crisp almonds.

All I needed with the pies was a cup of coffee, but that was not to be. If I ate only raw foods, I suspect I would live a longer, healthier life — after all, everything on the diet is pure, fresh and rich in fiber. But without coffee and chocolate, bread and butter, and the occasional rare burger and glass of red wine to look forward to, I'm not sure I'd want to.

Ravioli, oh!

"For a small to medium-size firm to make it to 50 years, in today's day and age of big conglomerates, is a major accomplishment," says Louis Ballarino, of the Dairy Maid Ravioli Company in Gravesend that he owns with his brother, Salvatore.

The company, which celebrated its landmark anniversary on Oct. 11, 2003, produces fine pasta products such as manicotti, stuffed shells, tortellini and cavatelli.

To pair with the pasta, Dairy Maid sells containers of marinara, meat, Alfredo, calamari and scungilli sauces. And to keep up with changing customer demand, the Ballarinos have added lobster, asparagus and portobello mushroom ravioli to their standard meat and cheese offerings.

Dairy Maid products are sold in John's Meat Market, 2667 Coney Island Ave. at Avenue X in Sheepshead Bay, (718) 743-5770; and G & S Salumeria and Pork Store, 2611 Avenue U between 26th and 27th streets in Midwood, (718) 646-9111. The company also maintains a well-stocked retail store in front of the plant for local shoppers in need of a carbo fix.

Dairy Maid Ravioli Company (216 Ave. U between West Fifth and Van Sicken streets) accepts cash only. The store is open Tuesday through Saturday, 8 am to 6 pm.

For further information, call (718) 449-2620 or visit their Web site at www.dairymaidravioli.com.

— Tina Barry

(Left to right) Anthony and Louis Ballarino with freshly made cheese ravioli at their Dairy Maid Ravioli Company.

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Free for all

Singer Peri Smilow's music joins Passover with civil rights

By Lisa Selin Davis
For The Brooklyn Papers

"This is *besht*," Peri Smilow says when I visit her in her Park Slope apartment.

The word is Yiddish for "meant to be," and Smilow, 43, an educator and singer-songwriter of contemporary Jewish music, feels destiny has brought her to Brooklyn.

Today, fate has found the perpetually smiling, petite musician home instead of on the road, an anomaly since Smilow's third CD, "The Freedom Music Project: The Music of Passover and the Civil Rights Movement," often has her traveling.

Passover honors the story of the Jews' exodus from the enslavement of the Egyptians, and a key component of the Seder, the traditional Passover ceremony and dinner, is to acknowledge the plights of other struggling groups.

Smilow grew up singing. Her father, a doctor, performed regularly in the community theater in the suburbs of East Brunswick, N.J., and her mother played piano and danced. For her eighth birthday, her parents bought her a guitar, but no lessons.

"I told them to hire babysitters who could play guitar, and after my little sisters went to sleep I would stay up and learn a little from them," said Smilow, who now has a 10-month-old baby of her own who's perfecting her crawl.

Smilow came to New York in the early 1980s, and worked in theater by night and after-school programs for underprivileged children by day. When she realized she cared more about the kids than her audition schedule, she moved to Boston to head an interracial

and intergenerational non-profit group. She earned a master's degree in education from Harvard, and was happy to leave entertaining behind... sort of.

For fun, she joined a songwriting group that met monthly, and sang for her congregation. As technology changed and home-recording studios grew, Smilow found she could satisfy the requests of her newfound fan base, and lay some tracks down. Her first album, "Songs of Peace," came out in 1993, and included four of her own songs.

"It was amazing," says Smilow. "People began to call and say, 'Hey, do you do concerts?'"

And suddenly, as if fated to be, a folksinging career was born. The only problem was, the educational career was still in full swing.

"I was working 60 or 70 hours a week, and then on nights and weekends, I would go singing," says Smilow. "At a certain point I realized I could no longer do both."

That point came when she was driving from work to a concert, changing into a concert, changing into a concert, changing into a concert.

Smilow is not the first artist to take on contemporary Jewish music — music that marries the sounds of modern folk, like Joan Baez or James Taylor, to the spiritual presence and liturgy of Judaism.

There's Debbie Friedman, who also has a line of Hallmark cards, and Jeff Klepper, who both created the sound.

"But I'm different in that I focus on issues of social justice," says Smilow. "I talk about politics. I encourage the Jewish community to reach out."

In 1996, Smilow teamed up with Minister LeRoux, Hampton from the New Covenant Christian Church in Mattapan, Mass., to provide music for the Anti-Defamation League's annual Black-Jewish Seder in Boston. When she had Hampton and his family over to dinner,



Common ground: Park Slope singer-songwriter Peri Smilow brings black and Jewish communities together with her contemporary Jewish folk music.

he told her he had lived in Boston for 20 years and had not once been in the house of a white person.

"We're still a segregated society in some very fundamental ways," Smilow says sadly, but adds that she found music was a way to move integration forward.

"It became apparent through the music that the two communities had more in common than they thought."

Hampton and Smilow put together the "Freedom Music Project," mixing Passover tunes with black spirituals. The 10 songs range from "Wade in the Water" to "Aveleim Hayim (Once we were slaves, now we are free)." She was finally able to join her disparate worlds of spirituality, education and entertainment.

Fate brought Smilow back to New York when she married NY 11 newscaster and fellow folksinger Budd Mishkin, and now the buffet table in their railroad apartment is crammed with pictures of

the Smilow-Mishkin clan.

Of late, she is designing "Concert-in-a-Box," a 10-week program to bring black and Jewish communities together through spiritual music. The groups not only sing together, they have a list of suggested activities, including having one another over for dinner.

Can that program apply to our very own Brooklyn, where blacks and Jews have had a long and hard history of confrontation in neighborhoods like Crown Heights? Maybe, says Smilow.

"What you need to make change is to have areas of common interest," she says. "Music is one way that can happen."

Although Smilow performs around the country, destiny has not handed her a concert in Brooklyn — but she wants one.

Says Smilow, "All I need is an invitation."

Pints & phantoms

'The Weir' cast shares great stories over brews

By Paulanne Simmons
For The Brooklyn Papers

Connor McPherson's "The Weir" with its spine-tingling ghost stories told in a rural Irish pub, allows the Gallery Players to show off what they do best — provide top-notch acting and create a masterful, realistic set.

Set designer Todd M. Reentsma has recreated a typical Irish pub that's perfect down to the lace window curtains and Irish flag beneath the television. And Heather Snobhan Curran directs a top-notch cast that makes the spoken word a joy to hear.

And that is especially important here, as Curran makes a valiant effort to keep her actors moving in a play that basically has no action, or plot. The cast has mastered the Irish accent and Gaelic numerals so well they might well have kissed the Blarney Stone. But there is probably nothing that can be done with McPherson's work to make it into a play.

"The Weir" is about four pub regulars: Jim (Joshua Bevans), Brendan (Patrick Toon), Finbar (Mike Durkin) and Jack (John Blaylock, having grown a beard and shed the English accent he is so often called upon to use in Gallery Players productions), who regularly pass the time and quench their thirst at a local pub, in an isolated town where there really isn't much else to do.

When Finbar, a wealthy businessman and property owner, brings over a woman named Valerie (Brooke Delaney), who has just bought a house from him, the men exchange their idle gossip and harmless barrage of insults for the telling of tall tales.

They do this with an eloquence, a



Easy being green: John Blaylock, Brooke Delaney, Patrick Toon and Mike Durkin in the Gallery Players production of "The Weir," which is set in an Irish pub.

sense of foreboding and an evocation of the magical and mysterious that have made the Irish among the best authors of the English language (as any Irishman will tell you).

Jack, an aging bachelor, tells a story about a house (the very one Valerie has just bought) that was constructed on a route used by fairies. Finbar relates a scary story about a strange woman he saw at the top of a staircase. Finally, Jim timidly tells of how, when digging a grave, he met the man who was destined for it.

But it is Valerie who has the most frightening and heart-rending story of all. And it is her story that brings out

plot to speak of beyond the transforming effects of the spoken word."

Apparently he didn't mind this lack of plot. Neither did the respondents to The Royal National Theatre's survey who voted "The Weir" one of the most significant plays of the 20th century, nor the London Evening Standard, which gave McPherson its Most Promising Playwright award. And when the production moved to a theater on England's West End, it won the 1999 Olivier Award for Best New Play.

But this reviewer did mind. And, possibly, American audiences did, too. "The Weir" opened at the Walter Kerr Theatre on April 1, 1999 and closed seven months later, after 277 performances. Not exactly a stellar run.

A weir is a dam, and a dam can either hold water or let it come forth, sometimes as a powerful flood. In McPherson's play the weir metaphorically breaks and lets loose a flood of words that sets free the emotions each storyteller has kept bottled up — sometimes for years.

But after the stories are over, as beautifully rendered as they are, one does not get the feeling that much has changed. No new decisions have been made, no old ones broken. No one has changed his mind or resolved to take new steps. There's a touch of regret, a bit of advice and everyone leaves to go home.

Perhaps at a time when we are saturated with the meaningless dialogue of television sitcoms and blockbuster movies, when films can sweep the Academy Awards without garnering a single award for acting, many may think it enough for a play to have good dialogue delivered well and with feeling.

But we have a right to demand more of our playwrights. We have a right to demand vision. We have a right to demand movement. We have a right to demand problems, and alternatives if not solutions.

"The Weir" is a wonderfully executed production. It is a sheer pleasure to watch every one of these talented actors. But at the end of the play, one may wish they were given a little more to say.

THEATER

The Gallery Players production of "The Weir" runs through April 11: Thursday through Saturday, at 8 pm and Sunday, at 3 pm. Tickets are \$15, \$12 seniors and children under 12. The Gallery Players are located at 199 14th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues in Park Slope. For more information, call (718) 595-0547 or visit www.gallery-players.com.

the compassion, friendship and common decency in our four men.

In an exceedingly laudatory review, Fergus McGillicuddy called the London production of "The Weir," "a darkly magical, lyrical little play with no

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The New York Times March 17, 2004

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Spring thaw

Pianist Yefim Bronfman returns to Bargemusic with 'Spring' Sonata

By Kevin Flipski
for The Brooklyn Papers

Pianist Yefim Bronfman's performance at Bargemusic on April 8 and 10 will also serve as a reunion with Mark Peskanov, the floating venue's artistic director and frequent violinist.

"Mark is an old friend from our school days," says Bronfman, who attended Juilliard together in the late 1970s, begin both programs with Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, best known as the "Spring Sonata."

"This sonata is one of the most lyrical and very dramatic pieces Beethoven ever wrote, and he plays with those two elements in the most effective way," says Bronfman. "Beethoven wasn't the greatest melodic, but this sonata contains some of his most beautiful melodies."

"Then there's the drama that he brings to it, one of the most important elements making Beethoven a special composer," he adds. "Also, this sonata has one of the best interplays between violin and piano, something that in 1842 was a conversation between two lovers we're eavesdropping on."

list Mark Holloway and cellist Nicholas Canellakis. At 30 minutes, Schumann's quintet has an epic quality rare for such an intimate work: he composed it in 1842 as a gift to his wife, Clara, a gifted pianist.

cause it was here that he got much of his inspiration. His quintet has the flavor of romanticism and a beauty unparalleled in any of his other music. It's really a unique piece to hear even more Francaix after being introduced to his refined, stylish music.

As for Bronfman, he's excited to return to the East River barge to perform and, as he notes, sit in the audience for the Francaix trio.

Also on the Bargemusic programs is a work Bronfman doesn't play the String Trio by Belgian Jean Francaix (1912-1997), an elegant, beguiling composer whose music, unaccountably, is infrequently performed here.

Peskanov calls Francaix's

performance at Bargemusic on April 8 and 10 will also serve as a reunion with Mark Peskanov, the floating venue's artistic director and frequent violinist.

"Mark is an old friend from our school days," says Bronfman, who attended Juilliard together in the late 1970s, begin both programs with Beethoven's Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major, best known as the "Spring Sonata."

"This sonata is one of the most lyrical and very dramatic pieces Beethoven ever wrote, and he plays with those two elements in the most effective way," says Bronfman. "Beethoven wasn't the greatest melodic, but this sonata contains some of his most beautiful melodies."

"Then there's the drama that he brings to it, one of the most important elements making Beethoven a special composer," he adds. "Also, this sonata has one of the best interplays between violin and piano, something that in 1842 was a conversation between two lovers we're eavesdropping on."

list Mark Holloway and cellist Nicholas Canellakis. At 30 minutes, Schumann's quintet has an epic quality rare for such an intimate work: he composed it in 1842 as a gift to his wife, Clara, a gifted pianist.

cause it was here that he got much of his inspiration. His quintet has the flavor of romanticism and a beauty unparalleled in any of his other music. It's really a unique piece to hear even more Francaix after being introduced to his refined, stylish music.

As for Bronfman, he's excited to return to the East River barge to perform and, as he notes, sit in the audience for the Francaix trio.

Also on the Bargemusic programs is a work Bronfman doesn't play the String Trio by Belgian Jean Francaix (1912-1997), an elegant, beguiling composer whose music, unaccountably, is infrequently performed here.

Peskanov calls Francaix's

SAT, APRIL 3

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

OPENING DAY: Celebrate Prospect Park's official opening day 2004. Little League baseball park, and opening ball toss, begins at 10 a.m. Corner of 10th Street and Seventh Avenue. Activities include carousels (51 each), Prospect Park Zoo activities, Lefferts Historic House tour, Audubon Center events. More for all info visit www.prospectpark.org. Call (718) 965-8960.

WATERFLOUT TOUR: Brooklyn Public Library Foundation hosts "GO: What's New on the Waterfront?" Tour visit art galleries, performance spaces, Vinegar Hill, and more. \$12. \$8 members. 11 a.m. Meet in front of Eagle Warehouse, 28 Old Fulton St. (718) 235-0789.

BROWNSTONE BROOKLYN WALK: New York Like a Native take a walk through Park Slope, Prospect Park, Fort Greene and downtown Brooklyn. \$30 includes lunch. 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call for reservations and meeting place. (718) 393-7537.

WALKING TOUR: Big Ocean Visions tour takes a walk through Brooklyn Heights and over the Brooklyn Bridge. \$12. \$10 students and seniors. 1 p.m. Meet at southeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street. (718) 439-1090.

EGG HUNT: Oat's Head Park. 1 to 4 p.m. 68th Street and Colonial Road. (718) 638-6064. Free.

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS HUNT: Weston Adventures hosts a scavenger hunt around Brooklyn Heights. Visit places associated with Lincoln, Capote, Mailer and others. Hunt takes participants to NY Transit Museum. \$50 plus museum admission. 2 p.m. Meet at front steps of Borough Hall, 209 Jonathan St. (718) 638-6064.

PERFORMANCE

BARGEMUSIC: presents a chamber concert of works by Weber, Lees and Schumann. \$35. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

GALLERY PLAYERS: presents "The Weir." \$15. \$12 seniors and children 12 and under. 8 p.m. 199 16th St. (718) 395-0547.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE: presents First Weekends New Performance and Discussion series. Tonight: Maltosa Brings Dance and Nami Yamamoto. \$15. \$10 members. \$8 low-income. 8 p.m. 421 51st Avenue. (718) 832-0018.

BRIC STUDIO: DanceSpace Project presents "Out of Space," a program of \$10. \$10 students. 8 p.m. 37 Rockwell Place. (718) 855-1882.

ST. ANN'S WAREHOUSE: presents "Accidental Nostalgia: An Openly About the Pros and Cons of America." \$25. 8 p.m. 38 Water St. (718) 254-4779.

DANCE: New York's Creative Outlets Dance Theater presents. \$40. \$30. \$20. 8 p.m. Brooklyn Academy of Music. (718) 638-4100.

BARRES BAR: River Alexander and the Maci Barres play 20s and 30s swing music. 9 p.m. Also, The Wives plays Blue Ridge music at 9 p.m. 25th North St. (718) 965-9177.

PARCOUR JAZZ: The Victor Jones Quartet play \$15 donation plus two sets, beverages and snacks. 9:30 p.m. and 10:45 p.m. 119 Vanderbilt Ave. (718) 855-1981.

UP OVER JAZZ: Adonis Rose and Quintessence. \$15 plus \$5 minimum. 9 p.m. 11 and 10:30 a.m. 351 Flatbush Ave. (718) 398-5413.

FREDDY'S BACKROOM: Acoustic Trauma plays folk-punk. No cover. 9:30 p.m. Other groups. 485 Dean St. (718) 622-7035.

CLOUENIE: Classic rock. No cover. 10 p.m. Cousins II. 140 Court St. (718) 403-9514.

JAZZ: Magnolia Restaurant presents Hoots Group. No cover or minimum. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 207-3613.

GALAPAGOS: Emerging artists series. 10 members. \$8 low-income. 6 p.m. 421 51st Avenue. (718) 832-0018.

BARRES BAR: Volinist Jerry Scheinman plays. 7 p.m. 36th North St. (718) 965-9177.

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BARRES BAR: Volinist Jerry Scheinman plays. 7 p.m. 36th North St. (718) 965-9177.

SUN, APRIL 4

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

OPENING DAY: Celebrate Prospect Park's official opening day 2004. Little League baseball park, and opening ball toss, begins at 10 a.m. Corner of 10th Street and Seventh Avenue. Activities include carousels (51 each), Prospect Park Zoo activities, Lefferts Historic House tour, Audubon Center events. More for all info visit www.prospectpark.org. Call (718) 965-8960.

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WALKING TOUR: Big Ocean Visions tour takes a walk through Brooklyn Heights and over the Brooklyn Bridge. \$12. \$10 students and seniors. 1 p.m. Meet at southeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street. (718) 439-1090.

EGG HUNT: Oat's Head Park. 1 to 4 p.m. 68th Street and Colonial Road. (718) 638-6064. Free.

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS HUNT: Weston Adventures hosts a scavenger hunt around Brooklyn Heights. Visit places associated with Lincoln, Capote, Mailer and others. Hunt takes participants to NY Transit Museum. \$50 plus museum admission. 2 p.m. Meet at front steps of Borough Hall, 209 Jonathan St. (718) 638-6064.

PERFORMANCE

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BARRES BAR: River Alexander and the Maci Barres play 20s and 30s swing music. 9 p.m. Also, The Wives plays Blue Ridge music at 9 p.m. 25th North St. (718) 965-9177.

PARCOUR JAZZ: The Victor Jones Quartet play \$15 donation plus two sets, beverages and snacks. 9:30 p.m. and 10:45 p.m. 119 Vanderbilt Ave. (718) 855-1981.

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BARRES BAR: Volinist Jerry Scheinman plays. 7 p.m. 36th North St. (718) 965-9177.

WEDS, APRIL 7

ELDER LAW SEMINAR: Make sure your wealth passes to your heirs, plus advice on nursing home costs, long term care insurance. Two sessions. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. 15 Bay Ridge Ave. (800) 395-5742. Free.

HIP HOP: Dance workshop with Julian The 12.45 p.m. St. Joseph's College, 245 Clinton Ave. (718) 399-2602. Free.

MEET THE AUTHOR: Author and illustrator Megan Cash reads from her book "What Makes the Seasons?" \$4. Free for members. 2:30 p.m. Brooklyn Children's Museum. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

MEDITATION: at Brooklyn Public Library. Carroll Gardens branch. 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. 396 Clinton St. (718) 833-5751.

COMEDY: Grand Central Bar presents several entertainers doing stand-up. No cover. 8 p.m. 659 Grand St. (718) 387-5515. Free.

BARRES BAR: Night of the Rascal Limbs plays. 8 p.m. Other groups. 376 North St. (718) 965-9177.

THURS, APRIL 8

BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN: Adult ed class, "Composition on the Page." Learn how to illustrate by interpreting the style of botanically illustrated plants. 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 622-7220.

STORIES FOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS: Author and storyteller Sydney Pearl reads from her book "Elijah's Tears." \$4. Free for members. 2:30 p.m. Brooklyn Children's Museum. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Youth program invites kids to learn about law enforcement as a career. Meet with local police officers and judge. 3:30 p.m. NYPD Hall President. 191 Union St. (718) 834-3321.

SYNOPSIS: Pratt Institute. School of Architecture, presents William Kattalos, professor, Pratt Institute. He discusses experimental structures. 6 p.m. Higgins Hall South, room 115. 200 Willoughby Ave. (718) 399-4303. Free.

BARGEMUSIC: presents a chamber music concert of Schubert and Mozart. \$35. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

BARRES BAR: Gina Leshman plays everything from the alto sax to the bass clarinet. 9 p.m. Other groups. 376 North St. (718) 965-9177.

FREDDY'S BACKROOM: Open mic night. No cover. 9:30 p.m. 485 Dean St. (718) 622-7035.

FRI, APRIL 9

Good Friday
BAMCINEMATEX: Series of films by French director and photographer Raymond Depardon. Today: "Poetics Paysan." 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. 430 p.m. 4:50 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. Brooklyn Museum. (718) 638-4100.

MOVIE NIGHT: Brooklyn Historical Society presents "The Secret of the Rose." 7:30 p.m. Festival present "Black Field Fence." \$6. \$4 students and seniors. 6:30 p.m. 128 Piermont St. (718) 222-4111.

BARRES BAR: Gina Leshman plays everything from the alto sax to the bass clarinet. 9 p.m. Other groups. 376 North St. (718) 965-9177.

EASTER SHOW: Family entertainment. Easter baskets given to the first 100 kids. 12 and under. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sunset Park Community Church. 5324 13th Avenue. (718) 439-4464. Free.

FISH TALK: Brooklyn Aquarium Society hosts a talk "Dwells on Paradise: The Apistogramma Family." \$5 for non-members. 7:30 p.m. New York Aquarium. Surf Avenue and West Eighth Street. (718) 837-4455.

PASSION PLAY: St. John's St. Matthew Emmanuel Lutheran Church hosts its 25th annual performance of "The Passion of Jesus: An Eyewitness Account." 7:30 p.m. 38 Prospect Ave. (718) 768-0252. Free.

BARGEMUSIC: presents a chamber music concert of Schubert and Mozart. \$35. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION: Procession starts at Shawlow Junior High School, 46th Street and 16th Avenue. 8 p.m. First ceremony at Church of St. Anthony. 21st Avenue. 6:15 a.m. Bring your own candles.

JAZZ: Magnolia Restaurant presents Willie Martinez Trio. No cover or minimum. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 207-3613.

FREDDY'S BACKROOM: Acoustic Trauma plays folk-punk. No cover. 9:30 p.m. Other groups. 485 Dean St. (718) 622-7035.

GALLERY PLAYERS: "The Weir." 8 p.m. See Sat, April 10.

SAT, APRIL 10

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

CYCLING CLUB: Adult ed class, "Riding a road bike in Prospect Park." \$15 for juniors. \$25 for all others. Starts at 6:30 a.m. Call for meeting place. (718) 638-0268.

BROOKLYN WALK: New York Like a Native take a walk through Park Slope, Prospect Park, Fort Greene and downtown Brooklyn. \$30 includes lunch. 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call for reservations and meeting place. (718) 393-7537.

WALKING TOUR: Big Ocean Visions tour takes a walk through Brooklyn Heights and over the Brooklyn Bridge. \$12. \$10 students and seniors. 1 p.m. Meet at southeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street. (718) 439-1090.

EGG HUNT: Oat's Head Park. 1 to 4 p.m. 68th Street and Colonial Road. (718) 638-6064. Free.

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GALLERY PLAYERS: presents "The Weir." \$15. \$12 seniors and children 12 and under. 8 p.m. 199 16th St. (718) 395-0547.

MUSIC: Mike Dougherty, front man of band Soul Coaching, performs. 18-places. \$14. Doors open at 9 p.m. show at 10 p.m. Northside. 66 North St. (718) 599-5150.

FREDDY'S BACKROOM: Andy Snider plays his eight-string guitar. No cover. 9:30 p.m. Other groups. 485 Dean St. (718) 622-7035.

UP OVER JAZZ: Robert Glasper Quintet. \$15 plus \$5 minimum. 9 p.m. 11 and 10:30 a.m. 351 Flatbush Ave. (718) 398-5413.

JAZZ: Magnolia Restaurant presents Hoots Group. No cover or minimum. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. 486 Sixth Ave. (718) 207-3613.

ACQUATIC MUSIC: Alternative pop with Marwood. \$15. No cover. 10:30 p.m. 137 North St. (718) 737-7877.

CHILDREN

BARNES AND NOBLE: Help celebrate the birthday of Emily, of Seaside State. Give away includes children's party hats and coloring pages. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. 485 Dean St. (718) 622-7035.

EGG HUNT: Children are invited to an Easter egg hunt. Face painting too. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. First 200 children receive goodie bags. Brooklyn Bridge Park, exit at Main Street. (718) 802-0503. ext. 17. Free.

ARABIC MUSIC: Live musical performance and folkloric dance. Other Arabic activities. \$4. Free for members. 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Brooklyn Children's Museum. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4400.

BARGEMUSIC: family chamber music concert of Beethoven. 2 p.m. Call for ticket and meeting place. (718) 624-2083.

AUDUBON CENTER: Eggshaped Productions Puppet Show "Baby Who?" 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Prospect Park. Free.

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NOT JUST NETS • THE NEW BROOKLYN • NOT JUST NETS

Rather, Gehry looking to scale back plans

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Bruce Ratner and architect Frank Gehry are discussing modifications to reduce the number of buildings that would have to be condemned to build the massive Atlantic Yards basketball arena, office tower and residential development, a Forest City Ratner consultant confirmed this week.

"What the architects are doing is figuring out how to have the least impact while maintaining the value of the Gehry-designed buildings," said Richard Lipsky, a lobbyist for Forest City Ratner.

"It's all being looked at," he said. "When you get into the construction, plans are always in the process of being reconsidered. If we can mitigate the amount of people who would be forced out as a result of condemnation, well, that's a priority."

Lipsky made his comments to The Brooklyn Papers regarding the 22-acre plan that would, as currently proposed, displace more than 500 people from either homes or jobs within the site.

And Bruce Bender, Forest City Ratner's executive vice president for Government and Public Affairs, told Newsday this week that Ratner and Gehry were in talks to scale the plan's reliance on the state to condemn private property through its eminent domain powers.

Bender and Lipsky, as well as Ratner spokesman Joe DePasco, all declined to discuss what buildings might be saved or if any of the 17 towers planned to be built around the arena would be removed from the Keith Mendenhall, a spokesman for Gehry, also declined to comment.

Norman Seigel, the former head of the New York Civil Liberties Union, is representing many of the Prospect Heights residents who would be displaced in a pending lawsuit.

He said this week that a survey he conducted found that 334 people in 162 apartments and 33 businesses with 235



Architect Frank Gehry stands before a partial model of the Atlantic Yards.

employees would be displaced by the Ratner plan.

The news of changes belies comments made by Forest City Ratner executive vice president Jim Stackey who told some 200 people at a public forum in March that changes were not in the works.

"[Shifting the arena] would require bridging over 350 to 500 feet of Atlantic Avenue," he said.

Borough President Marty Markowitz met with anti-arena activists this week to discuss, in bullet point, everything from the number of buildings expected to be condemned to traffic concerns and parking.

Joel Towers, an urban designer and a member of Develop Don't Destroy, was at that meeting and advocated alternative

plans for the project.

According to sources, Markowitz would not commit to backing any new recommendations.

DePasco said on Wednesday that "a huge amount of engineering and design work" goes into such developments and that it would be premature to comment on specifics.

"What we've said all along is that the current plan is a process that continues," said DePasco. "From the beginning the guiding principle has been to minimize impact on residents and that remains a guiding principle."

"But it does call for some people moving," he added.

RATNER...

Continued from page 1

tenure athletes.

"The impression is that this is something that's being done out of the goodness of his heart," Jones said of Ratner's recent outreach to youth groups and amateur athletics groups. "But it isn't like that at all. My concern is that the arena should be used 365 days a year for amateur athletics because that's what those funds are for."

In 2000, city, state and Brooklyn officials committed \$67 million toward the construction of the Sportsplex in Coney Island. Then-Mayor Rudy Giuliani pledged \$30 million and the state legislature and Gov. George Pataki each offered \$15 million. Then-Borough President Howard Gordon secured \$7 million.

Sharon Toomer, a spokeswoman for Borough President Markowitz, said this week that Borough Hall's portion of the money is still on the table for the Sportsplex, although she didn't know if it would also be available to other amateur athletic proposals as more submissions surface.

"It was earmarked for the Sportsplex and it's still there," said Toomer, who added that the funds would not be available until 2006 and would not be divided among multiple groups.

Since it was first conceived in 1987, the plan for the 12,000-seat Sportsplex has been steeped in difficulties, and was es-

entially shelved after Giuliani shunned it in favor of building Keyspan Park, a baseball stadium for the minor league Brooklyn Cyclones adjacent to the Sportsplex site.

The plan was revived after it was listed as a site for indoor volleyball in the city's bid for the 2012 summer Olympic games, but that plan has since cooled in light of Ratner's plan for a downtown arena.

Kenneth Adams, president of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and a key supporter of the Sportsplex, said that while the funding from the borough president is still available, he didn't know if the same held true for the remaining \$60 million.

He said the future of Sportsplex would become clear by the end of the year when the design firm of David Brody and Bond, and the accounting firm of Ernst and Young, chosen to lead Coney Island's redevelopment, release their preliminary proposal for the arena.

"These are two absolutely distinct projects, with distinct funding needs," Adams said of the Downtown Brooklyn arena and Sportsplex.

Two Ratner spokesmen said this week that those amateur athletics funds have not been discussed as part of their plans.

"That's not even on the table, we haven't even looked at that," said Lipsky. "This issue of financing isn't the most challenging. It's the ability to configure

the [amateur sports] gym within the footprint without losing something else necessary to make a viable project."

And Toomer said that Ratner's group, with whom the borough president has worked closely on the basketball arena plan, has not approached Markowitz about the Sportsplex money.

Carlton Screen, executive director of the Flatbush Youth Association, said that the possibility of showcasing FSAL championships, or even playoffs, at the Ratner arena would be seen as great progress for amateur athletics in Brooklyn. Now, he said, playoff games are held in the Bronx, at Lehman College, and championship games are played at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan.

"This will give the amateur world in Brooklyn an opportunity to express itself," said Screen, who won city championships in 1965 as a captain of Erasmus High School's basketball and baseball teams.

Both he and Richard Kosik, a retired special education instructor who has taught at Fort Hamilton High School in Bay Ridge, said that they have met with Lipsky several times to discuss ways in which Ratner could reach out to youth groups, including building the smaller facility.

Kosik said that in at least three meetings Lipsky told him that facility was being considered as a development adjacent to the arena, although he didn't tell him precisely where it would fit in the already cramped Atlantic Yards landscape.

"I think that it could be a positive thing, with the Nets coming to Brooklyn," said Kosik. "Because all indications are that they would be very community-oriented

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Hundreds rally to protest Ratner plan



Katie Weitz, 31, shouts her opposition to Bruce Ratner's development plans at Sunday's rally.



At rally, 1-year-old Skye Rothstein, of Dean Street, whose family would be evicted by arena plan.



Hundreds showed up for the "Rally at the Railyards," on Pacific Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues Sunday.

On site, chants of 'No eminent domain for personal gain'

By Jotham Sederstrom

The Brooklyn Papers

Chanting "No eminent domain for personal gain," hundreds of protesters gathered in Prospect Heights Sunday, within three-point range of the site planned for a professional basketball arena that has been mightily opposed since it was proposed by developer Bruce Ratner last year.

The rousing, sometimes teary "Rally at the Railyards," drew more than 500 people to a stretch of Pacific Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues which, under current plans, would be demolished and resurfaced as roughly center court for the New Jersey Nets, the NBA team that Ratner purchased in January.

Community leaders and elected officials who oppose the plan to build an arena, office towers and high-rise apartment buildings along a swath of the neighborhood extending east from the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues, banded together Sunday afternoon to voice their disapproval.

The \$2.5 billion Atlantic Yards development relies on the state's condemnation of private property that would force the relocation of 350 residents and 250 employees at 40 businesses. The rest of the development would be built over Long Island Rail Road yards that are the north end of the site.

Among some 15 speakers who rallied against the project, Councilwoman Letitia James, clearly pleased with the

turnout, incited the crowd's vigor with a plea that veered toward call-and-response.

In response to her shouts of "Where we from?" James' supporters chanted "Brooklyn." When she yelled "No justice, no peace, whose streets?" the crowd dutifully echoed her rallying cry.

"We stand in your path, Mr. Ratner," said James, who has been a vocal opponent of the plan since its conception. "And when you said there were only a few voices, you were clearly wrong."

Aside from elected officials, including state Sen. Velmanette Montgomery and Rep. Major Owens, an eclectic group of musicians echoed the call for opposition with lyrics tailor-made to the rally.

The Jaybirds, a Prospect Heights-based three-piece fea-

turing guitar, mandolin and accordion, performed "Don't Tear Us Down." Led by Sam Zygmuntowicz, the group breezed through its anti-arena tune, earning the prolonged applause of a crowd that came and went as the afternoon turned brisk.

"Maybe some day you'll be passin' by and see the high towers fill the sky," sang Zygmuntowicz, a violinmaker on Dean Street who would be relocated by the plan. "Would anyone remember that the big sports dome was built on the spot that we call our home?"

Many attending the rally were tenants, homeowners and merchants who said their buildings would be condemned under the arena proposal.

The gathering moved Israel Amador, who said that he has



Jon Crow holds a sign protesting Ratner's proposal to build towers in Prospect Heights.

lived in a building on Dean Street for 35 years. As he mouthed rallying cries by Norman Siegel, the former head of the New York Civil Liberties Union who is representing Prospect Heights residents threatened with eviction in a planned lawsuit, Amador admitted that the rally was a first for him.

"I've never seen something like this before," he said while standing next to a friend. "This is something, I think, that's kind of special."

Asked for a comment on the event itself, a Ratner spokeswoman, Beth Davidson, declined, saying, "We have no further comment on the rally."

Despite an energetic crowd, which included children and at least a dozen anti-development dogs, some clad in sweaters scrawled with protest slogans, the rally was intermittently clouded with sadness.

Simon Liu, the owner of a canvas-stretching business on Dean Street, sang an operatic rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" before breaking down in tears before the crowd. He had warned onlookers that he might cry and when he did, several friends, including Patti Hagan, president of the Prospect Heights Action Coalition, hugged him as he descended the stage.

Twenty minutes later, Hagan fought back tears as she read an essay written by 10-year-old Nestor Roman, whose relatives would be displaced under the arena plan.

"Roots will be torn from the ground," she read from Roman's essay, "not giving future children the opportunity to know some great history of a special part of Brooklyn."

MTA seeks as much money as it can get ... from Ratner

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman Peter Kalikow said this week he would seek "maximum value" for an 11-acre Long Island Rail Road storage yards site in Prospect Heights — over which developer Bruce Ratner is looking to build a colossal arena complex — but demurred when asked if he would put the property through an open bidding process.

"I fight tenaciously for the rights of the MTA and the values of their properties," Kalikow told reporters after a monthly meeting of the MTA board Wednesday morning.

But when asked if the MTA planned to put out a request for

proposals on the site, Kalikow said, "I don't know."

Asked if the Atlantic Yards site would go to Ratner or simply to the highest bidder, Kalikow responded, "That's complicated."

During the meeting, Prospect Heights residents opposed to the arena plan, many of whom would be displaced to build it, asked the MTA chief to open up the property to a public bidding process and seek community input before handing it over to Ratner.

The developer is an old school buddy of the man who appoints the MTA board, Gov. George Pataki.

Ratner's plan would require seizing more than two square blocks of private land south of the rail yards and displacing approximately 500 residents and businesses.

His \$300 million bid for the

New Jersey Nets was accepted in January and he awaits final NBA approval and is in the process of finalizing the financing for the purchase, which includes investors such as rap star Jay-Z. He wants to move the team to Brooklyn.

Opponents of the plan accused Ratner of having a "backroom deal" with the MTA to purchase the rights to develop the site.

"The MTA has a history of closed books and no oversight," said Daniel Goldstein, a resident of 636 Pacific St., a nine-story luxury apartment building that would be razed to make way for the project.

Goldstein attended the board meeting along with several opponents of the plan.

Questions about such deals between the MTA and Ratner first surfaced last year when an MTA spokesman incorrectly told The

Brooklyn Papers on three different occasions that Ratner had already purchased the air rights to develop over the storage yards.

The spokesman later said that he had made a mistake and that Ratner did not hold the rights.

But speaking at a buildings trade conference in Manhattan earlier this month, Ratner thanked the MTA for "supporting" his plan.

"The MTA has been wonderful in supporting both projects," Ratner said, referring to both his plan and a plan to build a new football stadium for the New York Jets on Manhattan's West Side.

The MTA said it has not received an application to review the plan.

Frank Gehry, known for designing the Guggenheim Bilbao, in Spain, is designing the 7.7-million-square-foot development.



Patti Hagan, of the Prospect Heights Action Coalition, at the MTA meeting on Wednesday.

Poll: NYers won't pay for arenas

Associated Press

A majority of New York City voters don't want their tax dollars to go toward two proposed sports facilities, one for the basketball Nets in Brooklyn and another for the football Jets on Manhattan's West Side, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released Thursday.

However, 75 percent of respondents said they would support the building of a basketball arena in Brooklyn if no tax money were used; 59 percent opposed using tax money for the arena.

On the plan for a football stadium in Manhattan, 60 percent opposed it if they had to pay for it, while 38 percent said they would support a stadium if the tax money came from higher tax revenue in the surrounding neighborhood.

"Nets yes! Jets no! New Yorkers love the idea of Nets basketball in Brooklyn, if they don't have to pay for the arena," said Maurice Carroll, director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. "But they oppose the Jets stadium, even if they can be convinced it would be built without raising their taxes."

The poll also found that 85 percent of New Yorkers supported extending the No. 7 subway line to the far West Side if it can be done without raising taxes.

In response to a question on whether they supported Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan to end social promotions for third graders, 63 percent said they approved of the idea, while 30 percent said they disapproved.

Still, 61 percent said they did not like the way Bloomberg fired two education panel members who disagreed with him on the plan, and 45 percent said they disapproved of the way Bloomberg is handling the city's schools.

Forty-two percent said they backed the way the mayor has dealt with public school education, the poll found.

The poll, conducted between March 23 and March 29, surveyed 1,159 New York City registered voters. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.

Institute off chopping block?

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

A week after the City Planning Commission hosted a public hearing on the Downtown Brooklyn Plan, it is considering making two major changes, according to sources.

Those changes would include saving an architectural college and removing from the plan's consideration a plot of land at Flatbush and Atlantic avenues where developer Bruce Ratner is looking to construct the tallest of his Atlantic Yards office towers.

As part of the Downtown Brooklyn Plan, the city seeks to condemn 130 residential units and 100 businesses.

Included among those is the Institute of Design and Construction, a nearly 60-year-old college at the corner of Flatbush Avenue Extension and Wiloughby Street.

The school would be razed to create clearer sight lines from Flatbush Avenue Extension to a 1.5-acre open space which the city plans to build across the street.

But the school may be saved, according to Dolly Williams, Borough President Marty Markowitz's appointee to the 13-member City Planning Commission, which is currently reviewing the mas-



Vincent Battista, 58, president of the Institute of Design and Construction, stands in front of the school's building at 141 Wiloughby St. The building may be spared from the city's Downtown Plan, which would have demolished it.

sive Uniform Land Use Review Procedure application for the Downtown Brooklyn Plan.

This business has really been a long time. It's a good Brooklyn employer and provides good service," Williams told The Brooklyn Papers this week, adding, "I really think we should make a concerted ef-

fort in saving this building."

When he reviewed the Downtown Plan, Markowitz recommended sparing the school and putting the money slated for its condemnation into restoring area parks.

The City Planning Commission is scheduled to vote on the massive rezoning and urban re-

newal plan, which involves 22 separate actions, on May 11.

On April 26, at 1 p.m., the commission will discuss the plan at a public review session hosted at its Lower Manhattan office at 22 Read St.

The commission has the authority to modify, approve in fact or disapprove the plan be-

fore it is sent to the City Council.

Vincent Battista, president of the design college, said he will believe the school is to be saved when he "sees it in writing."

Even if the three-story college is spared in this go-around, he said, its future would still be

far less than certain since the city intends to extend the time frame for the urban renewal area in which it sits for another 40 years.

"We would have this hanging over us for 40 years," Battista said, explaining that the city could still swoop in at any time and condemn the property.

According to sources close to the plan, the planning commission is also in considering removing a triangular parcel of land where Ratner seeks to build a 620-foot tower. That skyscraper, designed by architect Frank Gehry, is part of Ratner's Atlantic Yards plan, a \$2.5 billion residential and office complex centered around a basketball arena to house his newly purchased New Jersey Nets.

The site is the only parcel of land included in both the Downtown Brooklyn and Atlantic Yards plans, and it is where Ratner would build the tallest of his Gehry-designed structures.

That has troubled Prospect Heights Councilwoman Letitia James and other elected officials and residents who believe that the entirety of the two plans should either be looked at as one or completely separate.

James last week called on the city to remove Ratner's parcel from the Downtown Plan.



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